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Wednesday, 22 September 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Address by Mr. Sulejman Tihić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Sulejman Tihić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sulejman Tihić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tihić (*spoke in Bosnian; English text provided by the delegation*): I wish to greet you all and express my great pleasure at having this opportunity to address this Assembly. I also wish to thank the United Nations, once again, for everything it has done and is doing for my country. Specifically, I would like to stress the importance of giving support to the returnees who were expelled from their homes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a multi-ethnic country in which Bosnian Muslims, Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, Jews and many other ethnicities lived in peace and tolerance for hundreds of years. In Sarajevo and in most other Bosnian towns, one can find mosques, Orthodox and Catholic churches and Jewish temples that have stood side by side for hundreds of years. For this reason, Sarajevo is called the Jerusalem of Europe.

Preserving the multi-ethnic structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with all its characteristics and diversities, presents an historic challenge, not only to Europe, but to the whole world. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the foremost meeting point of world cultures and religions. It therefore refutes the theory of the clash of civilizations.

I would like to update you on the situation in my country, which has made significant progress over the last nine years.

The infrastructure destroyed in the war has been rebuilt and macroeconomic stability has been achieved, with only 1 per cent inflation. The banking system has been consolidated and foreign debts are being paid off. Since the post-war period, the gross domestic product has increased three times over and national reserves have increased 14 times over. Foreign currency reserves and savings are constantly increasing as well.

We are on the right path to meeting all the requirements for starting negotiations with the European Union (EU) on stabilization and association agreements. Due to the Republika Srpska entity's failure to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), we have been unable to gain Partnership for Peace membership, although we meet all of the requirements.

Strong reforms are under way in the areas of education, customs, taxes, security and the defence

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system. Many new central institutions have been set up, such as the Defence and Security Ministry, the intelligence service, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Military Command and others. Compared with the approximately 500,000 soldiers of the three separate armies in 1995, the Bosnia and Herzegovina military forces now have 12,000 soldiers. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had some 70,000 soldiers in Bosnia in 1996, and the Stabilization Force (SFOR) now has about 7,000. The security situation is stable; the peace has never been broken. Since the Dayton Peace Accords were signed, not a single foreign soldier has been killed in Bosnia. Instead of being a consumer of international aid, Bosnia and Herzegovina is increasingly becoming a participant in international peace missions, such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Liberia, Timor-Leste, Haiti and others.

The common foreign, security and defence policies of the European Union have enabled the EU to take the leading role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By the end of this year, EU military forces will take over from SFOR in Bosnia.

The positive stabilization process — as well as the overall progress made not only in Bosnia, but also in the other countries created after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia — is being slowed down by an inappropriate attitude towards war crimes and war criminals. Some public and political officials are trying to find an excuse for the war crimes, saying they were committed in the interest of vital ethnic protection. Yet war criminals are treated as national heroes. This must be changed. Only on the basis of truth and justice can we build confidence and reconciliation among the people and friendly relations among our respective countries.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has an irreplaceable role to play in that process. We deeply appreciate the work it has done so far. In our view, it must finish the trials that have already begun, particularly those of the highest-level officials. Some of the cases not yet completed can be transferred only to courts of countries where the crimes happened. This can be done only when those countries are prepared to guarantee fair and correct trials.

Full cooperation with the ICTY must be an unavoidable requirement for accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions. Moreover, it is not enough to arrest and prosecute only war criminals on the ICTY's list. Local courts in our respective countries must prosecute thousands of other war criminals who are still at large, who constitute a destabilizing factor, who hinder positive processes, and who are often connected with organized crime.

In my country, we are going to establish within the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court a war crimes chamber. The chamber will take over some of the Hague Tribunal's cases, but it will also prosecute many other criminals. It is going to be The Hague in miniature. We will therefore need technical and financial support, and we will have to involve international judges and prosecutors with experience in such trials, above all those who have worked at The Hague Tribunal.

Next year will be the tenth anniversary of the genocide against Bosnian Muslims in the United Nations safe havens of Srebrenica and Zepa. The people most responsible for that genocide, as well as for all other war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina — Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic — have not yet been arrested. Those two men are responsible for the death of about 200,000 people. From this rostrum, I call on all in authority to arrest them.

The outstanding issue of about 15,000 missing persons, whose bodies are spread among numerous mass graves throughout the country, 320 of which have been found so far in Bosnia, presents a big problem for my country. We need help in finding the missing and identifying them.

The political system set up by the Dayton and Washington Agreements played a positive role in establishing peace, reconstruction and progress in my country. However, they are now increasingly becoming an obstacle to further development and progress. The current administration in Bosnia, with a federation composed of 10 cantons, a republic and a district — strong entities and a weak State — is an obstacle in our way towards Euro-Atlantic integration. It is an extremely complicated and expensive system that is barely operational. The people, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and outside, are aware of this to varying degrees.

I believe the time is coming for domestic political representatives to start to discuss the revision of Bosnia's constitution and its compliance with

international conventions. We have to create an efficient State with institutions and mandates that will enable us to become a full member of the EU and NATO. I hope we will get support and help from friendly countries and the international community as a whole. A good opportunity for this will be next year, the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. It is time for Bosnia to turn from the Dayton phase to the Brussels phase.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is sincerely and firmly committed to strengthening friendly relations with the neighbouring Republic of Croatia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and equality. Our geographical location, history, ethnic composition and economic and infrastructure connections are leading us towards overall cooperation. We are aware that, without a resolution of disputed issues, we cannot proceed further to European integration; we already have achieved some progress in this regard.

The countries of South-Eastern Europe have made huge individual and joint efforts to achieve great progress in changing the stereotype of the region as a backward, problematic and conflict-ridden area of the European suburbs. Regional cooperation is being promoted in the areas of defence, security, border control, free markets, visa regimes, combating corruption and organized crime and the protection of ethnic and religious minorities.

The issue of borders in the region cannot and must not be opened again. We have to arrange such matters in compliance with European standards. However, we have to open the issue of cooperation with respect to borders, since it is in our common interest.

I think that the Iraqi crisis needs to be resolved simultaneously with the Palestinian issue. We therefore support the initiative of the Quartet and the road map as a basis for setting up a sincere dialogue between the two States, with United States mediation. We also strongly condemn all terrorist acts, as well as execution without trial of Palestinian religious leaders. We strongly condemn the Israeli side's construction of the protection wall.

We are happy with the consensus among Security Council members on the transfer of sovereignty from coalition forces to the legitimately elected legal and executive authorities in Iraq. We think the United Nations should take the leading role in shaping the future of Iraq. The Iraqi people need to govern their own country, and the military forces that control the territory must respect the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq must be preserved, including sovereignty over its natural resources. We call for protection of Iraq's world heritage civilization and holy places, such as Karbala and the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf. With a view to helping the people of Iraq and contributing to the establishment of peace there, Bosnia and Herzegovina has sent a unit to Iraq to destroy mines and unexploded devices.

My country is sincerely committed to combating international terrorism and is an active participant in the international anti-terrorist coalition. Terrorism is not only a threat to peace and security; in our view, it is immoral and counterproductive. It is immoral because innocent people are killed, and it is counterproductive because terrorism cannot resolve problems. It only produces new ones. In that regard, I would like to highlight here the example of Bosnian Muslims, since we were the major victim of the aggression against Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. We managed to defend ourselves, but both during and after the war we never turned our hands to revenge or terrorism.

Allow me to review the issue of Security Council reform, as well as that of strengthening the efficiency of the mechanisms of the United Nations. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina know from their own experience what a lack of proper and efficient United Nations action can mean. If United Nations mechanisms were more efficient, the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina would not have happened or, at least, the war would not have been so long. If they were more efficient, then genocide would not have been committed in the United Nations safe havens of Srebrenica and Zepa. For that reason, I want to remind everyone of the Organization's obligation to assist the survivors in those areas.

When considering the situation in the world today, the question of efficient cooperation in the area of security is inevitably raised. The Security Council needs to be the leading factor for peace and stability in the world. It has to have at its disposal mechanisms that can be operated with efficiency and speed in order to prevent conflicts from becoming military clashes.

Among other proposals, we support the initiatives to enlarge the Security Council's membership.

Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to become a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In terms of Security Council efficiency, our experience has been mostly a negative one. Through our participation in the work of the Council, we hope to prevent a repetition of our experience elsewhere in the world. Therefore, we take this opportunity to confirm our intention of putting forth our candidature for the 2010-2011 term. Bosnia and Herzegovina deserves that honour and we are determined to prove our worth.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Sulejman Tihić, President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Peru.

Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Toledo Manrique (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The world of the twenty-first century faces a paradox. It is unified globally in the areas of production, such as trade, finance and in the digital revolution of information and communication technology — yet it is divided by the increase in conflicts, civil strife and transnational terrorism, as well as cultural and ethnic violence. The world is unified by universal values, such as democracy, human rights and respect for freedom of expression and the environment — yet it is divided when democracy clashes with social demands for more jobs and less hunger.

Those contradictory trends of globalization and fragmentation jeopardize governance not only at the international level, but also within nations. Conflicts sharpen; many poor States are rocked by domestic and external violence; terrorist organizations and traffickers in drugs, weapons and persons are emerging and amassing devastating global power.

Since the end of the cold war, more than 30 civil conflicts have caused approximately 5 million deaths and created almost 17 million refugees. In 2004, the United Nations has been administering 15 peacekeeping operations and 15 special political missions. That means that 16 per cent of Member States are affected by issues undermining peace and international security.

In a context in which no single Power can assure global governance, in a world where fragmentation abets nuclear threats, both nations and peoples demand urgent decisions — decisions ensuring global governance based on international law, increased respect for the United Nations, within a renewed and strengthened multilateralism, and the reinforcement of the values of peace and international justice.

In the global era, the world requires broad consensus. Peru considers that the best solution is to be found through both change and continuity. We must stabilize the world political situation and generate an international alliance for development and social justice. We call for continuity in order to attain the goals of the United Nations. We call for peace, security, juridical equality of States, the non-use of force, the prohibition of aggression, the international rule of law governing relations among States, international cooperation, economic and social development and respect for human rights — all of which are more necessary and have more validity today than ever before.

We also propose a change of tools, mechanisms and measures. The reform of the Security Council must be tackled realistically, bearing in mind its role as a mechanism for collective security for the international community as a whole. The people want a Security Council with guarantees of legitimate and effective decisions.

Peru is a country whose diplomatic tradition, since the nineteenth century, has supported multilateralism as the best means for international decisions, particularly to promote peace and development. Peru participates in United Nations peacekeeping operations. My country is contributing military troops in Cyprus, on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we are participating in Liberia and in Côte d'Ivoire. Recently, my Government decided to send a fully equipped company to help achieve stability, security and the reinstitutionalization of democracy in the Republic of Haiti.

As a result of our long-standing participation in maintaining peace and security and in promoting development, Peru has announced its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council during the period 2006-2007. We are grateful for the considerable support that we have received and for the favourable consideration given to our candidacy.

Today, 2.8 billion people live on $2 per day; 1.3 billion people subsist on $1 per day. Moreover, in the 1990s, social inequality became more pronounced throughout the world. According to the Worldwatch Institute, that increase in inequality affected not only personal incomes, but also access to water, food and energy — public goods essential for civilized life and socio-political stability. Today, the decrease in personal incomes and the increase in inequality are colliding like tectonic plates, producing tremors of social disintegration and international conflict.

Therefore, we in the international community must understand that the peace, security and stability of the world system are not related solely to political, military or strategic aspects. Peace and security have social and economic components. Poverty and exclusion militate against peace, security and democracy. Social exclusion produces violence, instability and national and international fragmentation and renders democracy fragile. We cannot overcome that situation if we do not cause globalization to have a human face and to become a positive force that provides tangible benefits to all nations and all human beings.

The rule of law and the international legal order must guarantee access to justice and respect for human rights. The rule of law must prevent impunity. At the same time, democratic societies must make transparency and the fight against corruption true policies of the State.

Peru, before the process of recovering its democracy, was captive to corruption, systematic human rights violations and the subjugation of justice to political power. The corrupt and authoritarian Government hijacked democracy, tortured systematically and made corruption a tool of political power. Today, the free consciences of Peru demand that those responsible be brought to justice. Therefore, I appeal to the Government of Japan to contribute to access to justice by authorizing the extradition of former President Alberto Fujimori for the crimes against humanity with which Peruvian justice has charged him, including his alleged responsibility for acts of torture, forced disappearances, summary executions and acts of corruption. Democratic Peru guarantees a fair trial and due process under the rule of law. I make this appeal in the conviction that the rule of law and the international legal order must guarantee access to justice. To deny such access is tantamount to enshrining impunity, and I am sure that the international order is not prepared to consider itself an accomplice to such impunity. We hope that that will not happen.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Peru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Namibia.

Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Nujoma: It is a source of pride for Africans and our friends alike to see you, Sir, presiding over the demanding business of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. You bring to your high office the immense wisdom and experience you have gained over the years as a dedicated public servant and Cabinet minister of the Gabonese Republic. You hold in your capable hands the mandate given to you by the Charter of the United Nations to give new impetus to the promotion of peace, human security and sustainable development throughout the world. I congratulate you warmly and pledge Namibia's full support to you personally and to your Bureau.

You will recall, Mr. President, the renewed spirit and firm resolve for change demonstrated by African leaders in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. There, we stressed a new beginning for Africa in transforming the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and launching the African Union and its development arm, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We also reiterated our commitment to embrace the African diaspora in consolidating and transforming our continent.

I am, therefore, delighted to note that the outgoing President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Julian Hunte, hails from the sister country of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean. I pay tribute to him for his excellent and successful service to the United Nations. During his tenure of office, he showed leadership and dedication to world peace, security and sustainable development.

We are gathered once again at United Nations Headquarters to reaffirm the precious ideals, principles and purposes of the Organization, and to transform them into action towards ending armed conflict, saving our children and investing resources to eradicate hunger, disease and poverty in the world.

Our illustrious and hardworking Secretary-General, my dear brother Kofi Annan, has left no stone unturned in his tireless efforts to exert his authority in conflict situations. His insistence on the centrality and legitimate responsibility of the Organization to be on the side of the poor, the weak and the needy in the world should be commended. In his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), the Secretary-General once again reminds Member States of the terrible state of the world, and offers real alternatives for world peace and security, social development financing and the mitigation of the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases. I commend the Secretary-General for his worthy interventions and effective leadership.

During the 1999-2000 period, Namibia had the rare honour and privilege of serving the Organization in two capacities. My country served both as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and, simultaneously, as President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, whose task, among others, was to prepare for the Millennium Summit and the adoption of the historic Millennium Declaration. I was thus called upon to co-chair that Summit together with my Finnish counterpart, Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen.

At that memorable Summit, the largest ever gathering of world leaders unanimously endorsed the far-reaching Millennium Development Goals and targets. Today we all remain bound by that historic and unique undertaking. Member States collectively pledged, among other things, to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality and improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for sustainable development.

By endorsing those Development Goals and targets, our Governments have made a serious and irrevocable commitment, through reliable public policy interventions, to care for the millions of our children all over the world who are asking for nothing more than love, protection and a peaceful childhood.

In this undertaking, we cannot ignore the ever-widening income gap between the rich and the poor, between the industrialized North and the developing South. This situation represents a dangerous time bomb, which the world can ill afford to let take its own course. Our planet Earth is too small to perpetuate the unacceptable juxtaposition of abject poverty and abundant prosperity. We will deal with this situation effectively only when we promote mutually beneficial commercial trade between the North and the South within the framework of North-South and South-South cooperation.

I would like to emphasize that the Millennium Development Goals and targets by themselves are only

declarations of intent. Our Governments must translate them into sustainable policies, buttressed by adequate financial and technological resources, to make a real difference in the lives of our peoples.

For its part, Namibia, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies, has adopted a countrywide programme to implement the Millennium Development Goals and targets. In addition to deploying our own resolve and capabilities, we call upon other development partners to assist us in our national efforts towards nation-building, reconciliation and transformation.

At the initiative of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Federative Republic of Brazil, world leaders converged at United Nations Headquarters on 20 September 2004 to exchange views and find workable solutions aimed at bringing an end to hunger and poverty in the world. We commend him for that important initiative, in which we participated. At the end of the meeting, a declaration was adopted, which Namibia fully supports. We call upon Member States and other stakeholders to implement it with due urgency.

The world has enormous resources with which to fight and defeat poverty, hunger and underdevelopment. In this process of dialogue, we must insist on a realistic balance between the total world spending on war and weapons technology on the one hand and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and targets on the other. What is required is political will and compassion on the part of world leaders. The debate on weapons of mass destruction must not divide United Nations Member States, but should lead nations to find and enhance peaceful coexistence and cooperation. Developed countries should consider their support to the countries of the South as an act of enlightened contribution to regional and global stability, and as a purposeful incentive to encourage increased mutually beneficial commercial trade and investment among all nations.

I wish to underline the significance of my presence at the current session of the General Assembly. Attached to my attendance are a long history, a personal journey and an unbroken link between Namibia and the United Nations over many years. I entered this building for the first time in 1960, as a petitioner before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

That was my first humble but determined emergence on the diplomatic scene. I have spent many years since then, attending various United Nations debates and conferences that dealt with the decolonization of Namibia and negotiations on self-determination and independence. During those many years, I addressed some of the Security Council meetings held in respect of the question of Namibia, starting in 1971, as the first freedom fighter accorded such an opportunity.

I got to meet and know many distinguished statesmen, diplomats, fellow petitioners and eminent international civil servants in New York, Geneva, Paris and other important conference venues. My Namibian colleagues and I will always treasure the advice, support and solidarity we received from the United Nations family, and from friends the world over. Many friendly nations of the world stood firm and rendered moral, material and diplomatic support to the noble cause of our freedom and independence.

Many world-renowned revolutionaries, particularly on the African continent, rendered selfless sacrifices, not only towards the independence of our motherland, but also to free the African continent from colonial exploitation and apartheid.

I therefore would like to salute and pay homage to the visionary leaders of the African continent who shaped the vision of African unity and the continent's emancipation from the yoke of colonialism, foreign occupation and apartheid. Among them, I pay special tribute to Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana; Ahmed Ben Bella, the first Prime Minister of Algeria; Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt; Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania; Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; General Murtala Mohammed of Nigeria; Antonio Agostinho Neto of Angola; and other African leaders and pan-Africanists.

Namibia's protracted liberation struggle was bloody and bitter. It caused the untold suffering and sacrifices of our people inside the country and those of us who were forced to spend many decades in exile. After many years of struggle, the international community finally recognized and endorsed the legitimacy of our cause for freedom, equality and justice, led by our national liberation movement, the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia.

Namibia became principally the legal responsibility of the United Nations, and in that way a unique partnership was forged for a common cause between the world Organization and the struggling Namibian people, which endured for 30 daunting and eventful years.

On 21 March 1990, His Excellency Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, then Secretary-General of the United Nations, swore me in as President of the Republic of Namibia. Later in September of the same year, I returned to the United Nations to address the General Assembly and, on behalf of my people, to thank the United Nations for the special partnership and the principled support in various forms that eventually gave birth to the 160th State Member of our Organization.

I paid tribute to those United Nations civil servants and members of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) who served diligently to ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). I also paid homage to those who died in the course of their duty in Namibia.

I wish to recall with appreciation that my initial access to the United Nations was made possible by non-governmental organizations, church groups, a handful of United Nations staff members and concerned diplomats from friendly countries. I sincerely thank them all. The Namibian people salute them and will forever honour the memories we shared. Among those many organizations, I wish to particularly single out and pay deserved tribute to the Africa-America Institute for its exceptional dedication to provide and expand educational opportunities to Africans across our continent, including Namibians, both before and after our independence. I join other African leaders in welcoming the Africa-America Institute's fiftieth anniversary education partnership campaign, which I wholeheartedly recommend for global support.

By my own decision and in compliance with our Constitution, I will be serving as President of the Republic only until 20 March 2005. I will then bid farewell to my State duties and public functions. I am looking forward to a less hectic life, but I will remain a fully engaged private citizen. I intend to undertake certain causes that are dear to my heart and be ready to assist national, regional and international efforts, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, people with disabilities, food production and infrastructure development.

At the beginning of my statement, I referred to the launch of the African Union, NEPAD and Africa's resolve to pursue a new beginning. I now want to add another crucial dimension, that of gender equality and the empowerment of women in decision-making and their election to national, regional and international institutions.

Our subregional organization, the Southern African Development Community, spearheaded this new thinking, and we are happy that the African Union has also started implementing this progressive and forward-looking agenda.

The recent inauguration of the Pan-African Parliament, which is hosted by South Africa, is a litmus test for Africa's renewal. We must not delay or fail in our joint venture to achieve the total integration of our continent.

The recognition and the full participation of women in decision-making are fundamental to Africa's transformation and industrialization. With that in mind, we proudly acknowledge the election of Mrs. Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania, who became the first President of the Pan-African Parliament. There is no shortage of competent and experienced African women to lead the way forward. The African Union Commission includes female commissioners from various African countries. Africa must place at the top of its agenda the involvement and support of women as leaders and role models.

Since the days of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and Africa have been true partners. In the process, they have offered one another mutual support and ever increasing cooperation in the vital fields of conflict resolution, peace-building, humanitarian relief and social development. Now that the African Union has established its Peace and Security Council, in addition to NEPAD, we envisage a wider scope for cooperation and resource mobilization to plan for the prevention of armed conflicts and human suffering in Africa.

With the attainment of sustained peace and stability, Africa's economic growth and poverty eradication will become a reality and the hopes and aspirations of our people will be realized. To that end,

we need continued and strong partnership with the United Nations.

From this podium and in various other forums, we have reaffirmed our belief in a peaceful, democratic, transparent and just international system. We have advocated a system that would bring the poor and the rich of the world together to save the lives of millions and pursue sustainable development and human security.

To achieve that noble objective, the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, cannot continue operating on the basis of undemocratic structures of decision-making. The Council should be reformed without delay; political will is what is lacking. We can do better. Now is the time. Africa needs its place as a key player in this world body. We demand our share of responsibility.

The current war in Iraq has divided the world, causing enormous human suffering and undermining international peace and security. There is widespread distrust among nations, and the danger of nuclear proliferation makes the situation even more alarming.

Millions of people in Africa, especially in the Great Lakes region and the Sudan, continue to experience untold suffering due to conflict and war. Namibia is deeply concerned about the killings and the human rights violations against innocent women, children and the elderly in the Darfur region of the Sudan. We call on all parties concerned, in particular the Government of the Sudan, to implement without delay all the agreements and commitments they have made.

Against that background, my Government fully supports Security Council resolution 1564 (2004) of 18 September 2004. While we support the efforts of the African Union to find a peaceful solution to that highly volatile situation, we feel strongly that the Security Council should assume full responsibility in accordance with the Charter. This problem can be resolved only through a Security Council resolution establishing a peacekeeping mission for Sudan, in particular to deal with human suffering in Darfur. In that context, as a product of the United Nations ourselves, and in the light of our commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security, Namibia is prepared to contribute a battalion to such a United Nations mission.

The United Nations Settlement Plan for Western Sahara must be implemented immediately. Likewise, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people must be realized. We, the international community, owe it to them.

Namibia reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba in order to allow the people of the two countries to coexist peacefully.

The global security situation is being further threatened by the emergence of mercenaries, who undermine legitimate Governments. The African continent has not been spared by this ugly phenomenon, which should be condemned by the international community.

The United Nations is the ideal place for finding solutions through multilateral negotiations and compromise. The Secretary-General needs the unwavering support of all Member States in order to play an effective role in the Middle East and Africa and in conflict situations around the world. Whether fighting poverty, HIV/AIDS or terrorism, the international community must act as one. We must stop human suffering and promote security and prosperity for all.

Namibia stands for peace, unity, stability and mutually beneficial economic partnership. Our Constitution is the primary guide we rely on in those pursuits.

My Government is implementing Vision 2030 and the successive national development plans in stages, with a view to further enhancing economic growth and improving the living conditions of our people, including by transforming our villages into viable socio-economic participants. Poverty, education, health care, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, skills development, the empowerment of women, the protection of children and assistance to people with disabilities are among the urgent national priorities covered in those people-centred government interventions.

We carry them out in partnership with business, labour and those representing civil society. Happily, the competent United Nations agencies and international experts based in Namibia are working closely with my Government to bring prosperity and transformation to Namibia and the subregion. When we succeed, Africa

will benefit and the world, too, will acknowledge the shared rewards of development partnerships.

I conclude my statement in the confidence that, through the United Nations, humanity will triumph over the challenges that confront us today so that the future generations will live in peace, free from the scourges of war, poverty, hunger and disease. I believe strongly that our common goals and objectives are achievable because a people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of society, will always emerge victorious. Long live the United Nations!

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Namibia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Mbeki: There are some matters on which we all agree. One of these is that, later this year, we will receive the important report that will be tabled by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which was constituted by our Secretary-General. The other is that, next year, we will mark the tenth anniversaries of the Copenhagen World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Beijing World Conference on Women and discuss their outcomes. The third matter on which we all agree is that, next year, we will observe the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the historic Millennium Declaration.

We will also agree that we took all these initiatives — the convening of the social, women's and millennium summits and the constitution of the High-Level Panel — because we were of one mind that we had a number of problems that needed to be solved. In the Millennium Declaration, we used inspiring words to sum up our response to these problems. We said:

> "We have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs." (*resolution 55/2, para. 2*)

We went on to say:

> "We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter." (*ibid., para. 4*)

We also said that our efforts to make globalization fully inclusive and equitable

> "must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation". (*ibid., para. 5*)

To this we added the commitment that

> "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty... We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want." (*ibid., para. 11*)

Naturally, we have no choice but to agree that we did say all these things and would undoubtedly agree that we meant what we said. I trust that this will not mark the end of the range of issues over which we would speak with one voice. I say this because, when I have asked myself the question "Have we achieved the goals we set ourselves?", I have found it impossible not to answer that we have failed. There may very well be others among us who will take a different view and say that a good beginning has been made and therefore that it is too early to say we have failed.

But I am certain that if we say to those affected by violence and war that we have made a good beginning towards the establishment of a just and

lasting peace all over the world, they will not believe us. I am equally certain that if we say to those who go to bed hungry every day that we have made a good beginning towards freeing the entire human race from want, they will also not believe us.

I would make bold to say that the vision of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level that we enunciated in this imposing forum four years ago resonates among the ordinary people who are victims of hunger and war as a beautiful dream that will inevitably be deferred.

Does this mean that, when we made the promises we made, we deliberately intended to tell the billions of ordinary people a lie? The answer to that question is obviously "no". Did we speak as we did simply because talk is easy and cheap? Again, the answer to that question is obviously "no". The question must therefore arise as to why the grandeur of our words and the vision they paint — of a world of peace, free of war, a world characterized by shared prosperity, free of poverty — has not produced the grand results we sincerely sought and seek.

It would seem to me that the answer to that question lies in the fact that we have as yet not seriously confronted the difficult issues that relate to the uses and perhaps the abuses of power. Yesterday, in his statement on his report on the work of the Organization, our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, spoke eloquently about the 3,000-year-old Code of Hammurabi, and said: "That code was a landmark in mankind's struggle to build an order where, instead of might making right, right would make might" (*A/59/PV.3*). We took it that the Secretary-General was, in his own elegant way, drawing our attention to the central question of our day: the uses and abuses of power.

Contemporary human society is characterized by a gross and entrenched imbalance in the distribution of power. That power is held and exercised by human beings. As human beings, the powerful share many things with the powerless. Together, the powerful and the disempowered share the common human needs to eat, to drink water, to be protected from the elements, to dream, to love, to laugh, to play, and to live.

But life itself tells us that all of that describes only what human beings share. The rest, the relations among us as social beings, is defined by our varied access to power and its exercise.

Without fear of contradiction, I have said that we all agree that later this year we will receive the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. I am equally convinced that, depending on where we stand relative to the power equation, we will hold radically different views about what constitutes humanity's most serious threats and challenges, and therefore what must be changed to respond to that perceived reality.

Both the powerful and the disempowered will undoubtedly agree that terrorism and war represent a serious threat to all humanity. They will agree that we were right to make the commitment in the Millennium Declaration to work for

> "a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter" (*resolution 55/2, para. 4*).

Many of those who have already addressed the Assembly have correctly drawn our attention to many instances of terrorism and war, to which we are all opposed. They have spoken of the bombings of the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and of the African and American lives those claimed; of the heinous 11 September outrage in this city; and of the acts of terrorism in Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Spain, Israel, Gatumba in Burundi, Beslan in the Russian Federation, and elsewhere.

They have correctly drawn our attention to the violent conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, the Sudan, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and elsewhere, and to other unsolved problems, such as self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, that cry out for a solution.

Both the powerful and the disempowered agree that the international community must act together successfully to confront these situations and therefore the threat and challenge of terrorism and war.

However, the powerful will also make the additional determination that terrorism and war constitute the central and principal threat and challenge that human civilization faces. They will make that determination because, almost by definition, the terrorists target them simply because they are powerful; they have no logical choice but to identify terrorism as the central and principal threat and challenge they face, and to which they must respond.

Because of their place in the power equation, what they decide will necessarily represent the global decision of what constitutes the central, principal and most urgent threat and challenge to human society, necessitating various changes in the global system of governance. What they decide will translate into a set of obligatory injunctions, issued by this Organization, which all Member nations will have to accept and implement.

Again, both the powerful and the disempowered will undoubtedly also agree that poverty, want and underdevelopment constitute serious problems that all humanity must confront. Many of those who have already addressed the Assembly have correctly drawn our attention to the reality of poverty, which billions across the globe continue to experience.

Among other things, they have correctly reminded us of the fact that some countries are poorer today than they were a decade ago. They have pointed to the virtual certainty that we will fail to meet the Millennium Development Goals we set ourselves four years ago.

Both the powerful and the disempowered agree that the international community must act together successfully to confront this situation, and therefore the threat and challenge of poverty and underdevelopment. However, the disempowered, who are also the poor of the world, will also make the additional determination that poverty and underdevelopment constitute the central and principal threat and challenge that human civilization faces.

They will make the determination that, because they are the daily victims of deprivation and want, which claim the lives of millions every year — translating into cold statistics about shortened life expectancy — deprivation and want represent the central and principal threat and challenge that humanity faces, necessitating changes in the global system of governance in order effectively to respond to that reality.

But because they are powerless, those billions — the overwhelming majority of the same humanity that needs to eat, to drink water, to be protected from the elements, to dream, to love, to laugh, to play, to live — will have no possibility of persuading this Organization, laughably described in the Millennium Declaration as "the most universal and most representative Organization in the world", to translate what they have concluded into obligatory injunctions, issued by this Organization, which all Member nations will have to accept and implement.

If, for a moment, we resist the temptation to speak in parables or in tongues, for fear that we might be punished for telling the truth, we must say that this stark and simple reality reflects the distribution of power and wealth in contemporary human society.

The wealthy and powerful feel, correctly, mortally threatened by the fanatical rage of the terrorists. They have the power to respond to this present and immediate danger with all their might, and, because they are mighty, they can determine for all humanity that the principal threat to them is the principal threat that all humanity faces.

The poor and powerless feel threatened by a permanent hurricane of poverty, which is devastating their communities as horrendously as hurricane Ivan destroyed the Caribbean island State of Grenada.

But, tragically, because they are poor, they do not have the means to respond to this present and immediate danger. Neither do they have the power to determine for all humanity that what they decide is the principal threat they confront, is also the principal threat that all humanity, including the rich and powerful, faces.

In the Millennium Declaration, we spoke of the need to implement

> "policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation" (*ibid., para. 5*).

Perhaps the mistake we made was to assume that the contemporary distribution of power in human society would permit this outcome, and that, regardless of this fundamental consideration, it would be possible for the concerns of the poor to take precedence on the global agenda and the global programme of action.

We comforted, or perhaps deluded, ourselves with the thought that this Organization is "the most universal and most representative organization in the world" — afraid to ask the question, is it?

Every year many of us who have spoken, and will speak, from this rostrum make an annual pilgrimage to this great and vibrant city to plead the cause of the

poor of the world, hopeful that this time our voices will be heard. Every year, after a few days, we pack up our bags to return to the reality of our societies, whose squalor stands out in sharp contrast to the splendour of New York and this majestic precinct that constitutes the headquarters of the United Nations.

In the aftermath, resolutions are passed. Again and again our permanent representatives, with their extraordinary and plenipotentiary powers, report that those resolutions oblige us to act to thwart the deadly plans of murderous terrorist gangs. Again and again they report that yet another appeal has been made to the mighty and the lowly alike, voluntarily to respond to the cries of the wretched of the earth.

We are truly proud and inspired to see you, Mr President, presiding over the proceedings of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, because we know that you will discharge your obligations as a son of the poor of the world should. We are moved by the fact that you had as your predecessor President Julian Hunte, who also understood intimately what must be done to ensure that the United Nations can become, in reality, the indispensable common house of the entire human family.

As an Israeli said to us at our headquarters in Pretoria a fortnight ago, it is perhaps time that we, the poor and powerless, abandon our wheelchairs and begin to walk unaided. Perhaps that will help to build the social order of which Hammurabi — and Kofi Annan — spoke, in which right makes might and not might, right.

Mr. Mwanawasa (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of South Africa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Djibouti.

Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Guelleh (*spoke in French*): The protracted period of tension that the international community is currently experiencing underscores the need for greater cooperation and commitment. It is fortunate, therefore, that during the past year the General Assembly benefited from the capable guidance of President Julian Hunte. The wealth of experience of his successor, Mr. Jean Ping, together with his great diplomatic acumen and insight, lead us to feel confident that he is in the right place at the right time.

We pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the exemplary manner in which he has promoted the United Nations and maintained and increased its relevance for the most critical issues of the day. The degree to which the United Nations is consulted on and participates in pivotal events and the resolution of crises throughout the world is a tribute to Mr. Annan's selfless dedication to the Organization.

He is also to be commended for the closer working relationship that he has been able to foster with the private sector and civil society through the global compact, with the aim of offering help and expertise to needy communities and young people.

As the Secretary-General stated in his most recent report on the work of the Organization, the United Nations — indeed, the world — has had a very difficult and challenging year. Many of us have been traumatized by terrorism, by the brutal acts of repression that are taking place in many parts of the world and by the tense situation and developments in Iraq.

For the majority of the world's people, however, the most immediate threats are those of hunger, poverty, lack of drinking water, environmental degradation and endemic or infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria. Overall, the Secretary-General notes that we have departed considerably from the vision and spirit of the Millennium Declaration of 2000, which embodied the

aspirations of our time: a world united by common values, with the primary goal of providing better living conditions for humanity, in an environment of peace and security.

Unfortunately, as the Secretary-General notes, events related to terrorism have shaken our sense of common purpose. The tragedy of 11 September 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the ongoing bloodshed in the Middle East and other disturbing incidents throughout the world have profoundly divided the international community about how to ensure our collective security.

While we have seen many examples of State terrorism, terrorism has become essentially stateless and nebulous in nature, and is able to spread without regard to borders or nationalities. Although there is no disputing the fact that terrorism must be confronted promptly and vigorously, the knee-jerk reaction of attempting to crush it militarily fails to address its many manifestations or get to its root causes.

We must pay special heed to our prejudices and fears as we endeavour to resolve difficult political problems that may have been building for decades.

We must also accept that terrorism is not a faith or an ideology. It may well be a tactic or a strategy of last resort on the part of those who view themselves, their faith, their beliefs or their physical environment as endangered. While we must act resolutely in confronting acts of terrorism, to do so precipitately, without examining the underlying causes, could prove destructive or even fatal. No one should excuse the brutal and heinous crimes that are being committed in so many places today, but we must acknowledge that the situation requires us to find a solution.

The international community is threatened by the instability that this phenomenon entails. We must not underestimate the importance of realistic foreign and development policies directed at resolving tensions and reducing poverty. We must find a way to bring the world together to reconcile differences and eliminate reasons for misunderstanding. The words and thoughts of the late American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, are relevant here. For him, security meant not only safety from attack by outside aggressors, but also economic, social and moral security. As he said, essential to such a peace is a decent standard of living for all individuals, for freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want.

We are all aware of the commitments we made at the Millennium Summit in 2000. The critical needs and ills confronting mankind were identified at that Summit, and we committed to resolving them in various ways and according to a specific timetable. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent a worldwide quest to eliminate poverty and hunger while improving health care, education and the environment.

Sadly, an evaluation of progress towards reaching these goals by the target dates reveals that we are making erratic progress. A recent study in Geneva found that the world is scarcely making a third of the effort necessary to achieve these modest targets. In particular, the eighth goal, which calls for a global partnership of rich and poor countries for development, envisioned a substantial increase in official development assistance (ODA), a reduction or cancellation of debts, the removal of protectionist barriers for agricultural products and free access to the markets of the industrialized countries. Needless to say, progress on this goal has been limited. It is the only goal lacking a deadline or timetable and is hampered by the apparent reluctance of developed countries to keep their commitments.

Of the 50 least developed countries (LDCs), 34 are in Africa. Although five or six African countries are close to transitioning, only one has successfully made a smooth transition. Attempts to mobilize domestic resources through the private sector will require more time and funds. Low levels of savings and investment rates testify to the huge decline in resources needed for development. Undoubtedly, there is an urgent need to continually increase development assistance to this group of countries.

Africa's need for development assistance has created the impression that the continent is a major financial burden to the international community. In fact, while Africa is disproportionately aid-dependent, it does not receive a disproportionate amount of aid. Overall, as things stand, LDCs will not be able to reduce poverty, achieve universal primary education or reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) describes LDCs' woeful deficits in savings dedicated to growth, public investment and essential services. The report also states that the conclusion is unequivocal and that on

the basis of domestic resources alone, LDCs cannot lift themselves out of poverty.

Today, in a post-11-September world, a new rationale for aid is emerging. Aid is increasingly seen as a potent force in the war on terror by providing support to both front-line States and weak States in which terrorism could breed. Additionally, there is a mounting recognition of endemic poverty and of the inequalities that threaten national security interests. Despite this realization, however, development assistance programmes have become more selective, aimed at a small group of countries that are in some way qualified. Nevertheless, many countries fail to qualify for this aid. Concrete actions must be taken for the sake of the millions suffering in those countries. We ignore them at our own risk.

Common sense tells us that conflict is endemic and hardly any region in the world has escaped its violence. However, the reality is that no new civil wars have broken out recently, and there has been a decline in the number of drawn-out conflicts within and between States. We notice that although the number of victims has risen sharply, the number of terrorist incidents has in fact declined. That said, fewer people are being killed by war than at almost anytime in the past century. Few wars are beginning and many old ones are ending. This is particularly true in Africa, where some seven millions souls perished in the conflicts of Angola, Congo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Somalia. With the exception of the Darfur region in the Sudan, each one of those conflicts appears to be either coming to an end, winding down or stabilizing. Of course, we are all deeply saddened by the scale of the tragedy in Darfur. This issue, however, needs to be tackled with the greatest care, clarity, fairness and seriousness. We must be cautious about making generalizations and forming prejudices too soon. We need to direct our efforts towards the right solutions.

Conflicts, of course, require weapons, and reducing this threat requires a halt to arms shipments. These shipments divert vital resources from other critical needs. The countries of Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa spend some $22 billion on arms each year, that is, more than two thirds of arms sales worldwide.

Solidifying peace in the world calls for more preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and additional peacekeeping missions. Unless fully supported by the international community through additional resources, further operations would strain United Nations planning, pre-positioned forces, logistics, procurement and command and control capabilities. What is required, therefore, is greater assistance for regional peacekeeping capabilities, particularly in Africa.

Any action undertaken must necessarily have the approval of the United Nations. This is the only path that confers a degree of legitimacy on any undertaking. Action undertaken by the United Nations implies the approval of the Security Council. Here it must be noted that the Council continues to operate in accordance with the legacy of the Second World War in terms of its structure.

Furthermore, the exponential growth in United Nations membership is not reflected in the Council. There is an urgent need for the developing world to have a stronger voice in the Council. The Council must have a more equitable and realistic distribution, in terms of both representation and composition. Security Council reform is long overdue and there is an urgent need to expand the reform in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, embracing developing and developed countries. We are pleased with the establishment by the Secretary-General of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Some of its initial soundings cover the expansion of the Security Council, recalling members' commitment to contribute to national and international peace and security. We deem auspicious the projected full review of the Council's work at the end of every decade, including a review of the manpower and financial resources of peacekeeping missions. We await the Panel's report this December to the Secretary-General, and we will consider his comments during the next session of the Assembly.

The President returned to the Chair.

Following the Arta Peace Conference, which we initiated and the outlines of which I presented to this very Assembly several years ago, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member States considered it necessary to complete this process by broadening its base. Since then, and to date, the Somali reconciliation conference in Nairobi, Kenya, under the auspices of IGAD, has achieved tangible progress, which we welcome. Particular recognition should be addressed to all IGAD member

States for their self-sacrifice and devotion, especially to our brothers from Kenya, whose good offices, patience and determination allowed the negotiations to continue even in the most critical moments. Indeed, the Somali representatives, spurred by the will of the region and the convergence of political and financial support of the international community, worked relentlessly to set up the first pillar of the Somali Government institutions — that is, the Transitional Parliament. This first stage, welcomed by the Somali people within the country and in the diaspora, and the international community as a whole, finally brought a glimmer of hope that the reign of anarchy and chaos would soon come to an end in Somalia.

The divergences of view that prevailed for a long time among the countries of the region on ways of resolving the Somali conflict have now yielded to common sense and collective resolve, to work in harmony and to collaborate in a sincere and fraternal spirit towards the ultimate goal of helping our Somali brothers achieve legitimate and lasting peace.

The misunderstandings and difficulties encountered during the process have provided an opportunity for a fresh review of the statements of the various regional actors for a clear-eyed and in-depth analysis, imbued with the genuine desire to show the solidarity of IGAD countries towards Somalia, and has made it possible to underscore the common need to help the Somali people to establish a broad-based Government that is representative and legitimate. This Conference has culminated in a Somali Parliament, where all the factions and various components of Somali civil society are represented, such as intellectuals, professionals, women and others. Last week, the members of Parliament elected a Speaker, and today they are electing his deputies before proceeding on 10 October to elect the President of the Transitional Government.

Without a doubt, and very importantly so, the facts bear out that we are today in a significantly different mood than the past, because this time the Somali people are more determined to deepen their dialogue and the reconciliation process. And as a region we are convinced that we must work together towards achieving the goals agreed upon. It is also the responsibility of the international community to act in a strong and decisive manner to assist Somalia.

In the first place, the international community must provide the necessary financial and political support to rapidly enable the new Government to create the conditions for achieving the rehabilitation of facilities needed to house the new Government; the provision of direct budgetary support to pay wages and other administrative expenditures; and the tackling of security issues head-on, in particular, with the implementation of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes (DDR).

In this first six-month critical phase, the actions undertaken by the new Government will determine the authority of its legitimacy as it proceeds to consolidate the gains obtained from the reconciliation process, with the aim of addressing the formidable expectations of the Somali people.

In the second place, at the political level, it is assumed that the new Transitional Parliament will be an all-inclusive body; it will agree to swear in members of this National Assembly; and all its members will accept the primacy of the rule of law, responsible norms of behaviour, disarmament and demobilization. Any contrary attitudes, actions or activities that could undermine the efforts to pacify the country or frustrate the effectiveness of the new Government should not be tolerated or accepted by the region or by the international community.

In this respect, the Security Council, the unique body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, may be called upon to take necessary measures in conformity with the United Nations Charter to apply the following measures in case the new State faces a resurgence of obstacles to the reconciliation process or restoration of the State. These would be the implementation of a list and a systematic regime of sanctions directed against those who would continue to undermine the Government's peace efforts.

We are deeply convinced that this is a unique opportunity for the international community to finally resolve the long-lasting conflict in Somalia. We need to acknowledge the changes that have taken place. The Somalis are determined, and the region is united. We should, at all costs, avoid repetition of the scenario we have experienced in the past. Let us seize this opportunity. Let us, together, help our Somali brothers and sisters in their quest for peace, stability, and unity.

Until now, innumerable resolutions, commitments, initiatives and peace processes to resolve the long-festering Middle East conflict remain at best rhetorical. A clear-cut vision of the two-State solution — a secure Israel side by side with a viable Palestinian State — rings hollow in the wake of a large expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank, with the building of thousands of houses on land confiscated from Palestinian families. All this sounds familiar. Over the last three-and-a-half decades, we have witnessed the blatant confiscation of Palestinian land, farmlands and water resources. The daily oppression and repression of Palestinian victims is beyond comprehension. Nevertheless, the Palestinians continue to struggle against all odds to maintain some semblance of civil order.

Making an already untenable and explosive situation even worse, Israel, in defiance of international law and public opinion, has embarked on building a separation wall, which is penetrating and dividing Palestinian territory in two, well beyond Israel's 1967 borders, thus creating facts on the ground. And, as we all know by now, Israel's proposed tactical withdrawal from Gaza is not a prelude to Palestinian statehood. All these violent and deliberate actions have made a mockery of the road map, and thus, rendered it worthless; this is the same fate that met the Oslo Accords.

Abandoned by the international community, the Palestinians are struck with indefinite deprivation, a sense of hopelessness and statelessness. That being the case, this Assembly has perhaps the sad duty to pronounce itself incapable of constraining Israel, a Member State of this Organization, rather than continuing to give false hope to a people that has already lost everything.

Djibouti, strategically situated at a crossroad of the seas, and serving as a gateway to the growing African and Middle Eastern markets, has been fortunate in achieving a period of sustained growth, stability and improved governance. Many of our facilities are presently undergoing considerable improvements to respond to, and to take advantage of the growing demands. A new modern port is under construction, the first phase being an oil terminal expected to be operational by next year, followed by a major container terminal, and finally by an industrial free zone that will be the first of its kind in Africa, offering light manufacturing and value-added facilities and services in a duty-free setting, including warehousing, storage and distribution.

In this respect, we wish to express deep gratitude to the inspiring and pragmatic leadership of Dubai, our key partner in this visionary venture, that will undoubtedly put Djibouti on the map of international trade and shipping.

Djibouti seeks to improve its private sector development by reducing the cost of creating or doing business, by improving its labour force through investments in education, training, health, social protection and eliminating gender disparities. The Government is also working to strengthen institutional capacity and governance, while developing its absorptive capacity to better manage, as well as effectively utilize, donor support.

The Horn of Africa has seen its share of conflict and natural disasters. Together with our friends in the region, we are resolutely engaged in mitigating the plight of our people, reducing tensions and conflict, developing cooperation in the areas of transport, communications, health and the environment. Regional and international security issues and, in particular, the fight against terrorism, are of primary concern to the countries in the Horn of Africa. Together with our international partners, we are doing all we can in the fight against that scourge. The same holds true for the HIV/AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria. Our region has no other alternative than to strengthen cooperation in all areas — from economic development to improving confidence-building measures.

Djibouti, friend to all, enemy of none, will spare no effort to further intensify the search for greater regional harmony and cooperation, while promoting a pluralistic, open, and healthy society at home.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Djibouti for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Duarte Frutos (*spoke in Spanish*): Today our continent is experiencing a time of great opportunity, yet it is also beset by serious threats, including a falling standard of living for the masses, radical adjustment measures, the globalization of financial capital and a lack of access to markets in developed countries — all of which have not contributed to generating sustained economic growth, and even less to reducing poverty and inequality. The great challenge before us is to redouble our efforts daily to eradicate this cancer by strengthening public institutions and forging a new social ethic, as well as a new international order with multilateral bodies that truly contribute to peace throughout the world, human development and the sharp reduction of poverty, social inequalities and the exploitation of man by man and nation by nation.

The United Nations, this noble institution, must not lose sight of its historic memory, its raison d'être and the objectives that led to its creation, if its efforts currently under way are to result in healthy attitude changes and a greater political capacity to institute regulatory frameworks that can put a stop to economic Darwinism and conflicts throughout the world.

Today, more than ever, the possibility of building a more just world, free from such painful contradictions, depends upon the inclusion of the less developed countries in the globalized economy and the political will to overcome pure market forces. The industrialization of the United States, Germany and Japan in the nineteenth century could be described in similar terms, as could their emergence from their relative backwardness compared with Great Britain, the pioneer nation of that time.

The failure throughout almost all of Latin America to overcome its backwardness, poverty and dependency is frequently due to selfishness and historic impediments to advantageous connections between our national economies and the worldwide market. If this seems to be a recurrent condition, then we should constantly keep in mind the message of the Consensus of Brazil: we must govern globalization if we are to turn it into a source of opportunity for all, if globalization is not to be what it has become — a force synonymous with marginalization, exclusion or conquest, dependent on markets and cheap labour, which leads to a form of semi-slavery in many countries.

I wish to propose to the General Assembly joint action that can be taken in four areas.

First, social investment throughout the continent must reach levels that will make it possible to attain the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, the poorest countries, which clearly cannot obtain such levels of investment, could have recourse to a counterpart fund for social equity with soft financing coming from international organizations and unilateral contributions.

Secondly, we realize that not everything can be solved with money. Money, when it is misused, weakens and corrupts. Accordingly, we must also commit ourselves to carrying out the necessary institutional reforms to ensure the proper formulation, implementation and assessment of social policies. And we must be ready to ensure that access to the aforementioned funds will lead to wide-reaching innovations in the management of public administration, demonstrable by means of indices on efficiency and transparency.

Thirdly, international organizations must increasingly realize that economic and social reform must flow from the experience and wisdom of those countries themselves, with their own formulas that are in keeping with their cultural standards and that involve all the representatives of civil society.

Fourthly, with growing levels of poverty it is impossible to meet the burden of external debt servicing. There must be a new, realistic policy that will put forward rational terms on future payment of debt, terms that will make it possible to lay the basis for sustained and equitable development, terms which allow us to meet our commitments without pushing our

people into irreversible poverty. It is important to place the needs of the poor and dispossessed over the repayment of the debt.

That is why we must imaginatively and skilfully devise alternative financing mechanisms for the fight against hunger and extreme poverty. That task requires greater intellectual resources and technical expertise and a new and fair financial architecture, not the accumulation of wealth, worship of the market or the promotion of globalization that does not allow the just distribution of the wealth produced by all of us throughout the world. We need a new financial architecture that enables us to reduce poverty and to work for the stability of the world's emerging democracies.

One year ago, my Government inherited a situation characterized by economic stagnation, recession and spreading poverty and by weak and unreliable public institutions, resulting in timid social policies that could hardly tackle the Millennium Development Goals.

Two major challenges face my country. First, the indigenous population — which in Paraguay is not large, totalling no more than 100,000 — lacks access to its most vital needs and faces the disintegration of much of its natural lands owing to the historical rule of indolent landowners, and most recently to a type of agrarian modernization that was insensitive to human dignity.

Secondly, the unconscionable face of extreme poverty in my country is that of the peasants. Today, two out of three Paraguayans continue to belong to that social sector. Likewise, one of the most significant causes of that critical national problem is the very unjust distribution of land that has existed for many years in Paraguay. That is not only an urgent and very shocking social problem, but also a political and ethical problem that is manifested in a repeated and increasingly grave struggle for land.

In the light of that situation, we propose a State with social, fiscal and environmental responsibility: social responsibility in the sense of guaranteeing health, education and basic services and avoiding concentration of profit and wealth; fiscal responsibility to avoid a deficit and chronic indebtedness, which ultimately punish social investment; and environmental responsibility to preserve nature's reproductive capacity and to ensure for future generations the right to enjoy resources not created by man.

We also propose the implementation of a national anti-poverty strategy that will channel the domestic and external resources necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The national Government has defined as a top budget priority an increase in social spending to resolutely address the problems of poverty, destitution and inequality, with the objective of reaching 40 per cent of the central administration's total public spending for next year, 2005.

For development, cooperation is not enough; there must also be access to markets on preferential terms, liberalization of the agricultural product markets and special treatment for the landlocked least developed countries, such as Paraguay, punished by history and geopolitics, which make our foreign trade more expensive and significantly reduce our competitiveness. There needs to be a compensatory framework to place my country, Paraguay, on an equal footing with other nations in terms of international trade.

In the international context, we join in the appeal for a more just and humanized international order in which the least developed are not always condemned to discrimination, indifference and backwardness. With that objective, we must move towards an inclusive multilateralism that will offer equality, rationality and justice in international relations.

Similarly — and in keeping with Paraguay's position on Taiwan in the United Nations — we once more reaffirm our conviction that the brotherly Republic of China, Taiwan, should become a full-fledged Member of the Organization, in accordance with the principle of universality and with norms of international law.

Today we have heard more of the same things we hear every year in the Assembly. But we hope that this time we can return to our countries and share with our peoples the news that finally, in New York, the world's leaders have taken important steps forward in alleviating — even if just a little — the pain, sorrow and hopelessness of the millions of human beings who live on Earth. I am confident that God will give us the wisdom and the strength necessary to lead our countries on the path of freedom, peace, development and justice.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Musharraf: Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, our warm felicitations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. We congratulate Mr. Julian Hunte on his successful stewardship of the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly. I also reaffirm our deep appreciation for the wise leadership of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his services for the cause of peace and progress in the world.

A profound transformation is under way in international relations. The dangerous balances of the cold war have been replaced by the complex and equally dangerous realities of our world today. It is a world marked by intensifying globalization of economies, production, trade and information, on one side; and by terrorist violence, poverty and disease, on the other.

The growing asymmetries in power among States, discrimination in the dispensing of international justice, repression of peoples' legitimate aspirations and growing socio-economic disparities have precipitated new threats to international peace and to international security: the threats of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and imploding States. The world today sees turmoil and upheaval everywhere, especially in the third world, and more specifically in the Muslim world. Too many fronts have been opened and too many battle lines have been drawn. The time for closing fronts has come. The world today is crying for peace, reconciliation and reform. Our objective today has to be harmony through reconciliation and accommodation, globally and regionally.

Terrorism poses the most urgent threat to many countries, including the most powerful States. For many of us, the terrorist threat is very close and may be very personal. Terrorism threatens Pakistan's vital national interests and objectives. We have thus participated actively in the unprecedented global campaign against it. Pakistan has led the way in that campaign. Our counter-terrorist campaign is ongoing.

Global cooperation against terrorism has been highly successful. Determined and collective action has contained and disrupted the violent agendas of the terrorists. We are winning the battle against terrorists. However, what we are doing is insufficient to win the ultimate war against them. The immediate anti-terrorist response has to be accompanied by a clear long-term strategy that strikes at the root of the problem if we are to ensure final success against this scourge.

I have proposed a two-pronged strategy of enlightened moderation to overcome terrorism and prevent a clash of civilizations. The most recent Islamic Summit, in Malaysia, endorsed that plan, which involves, on the one hand, internal socio-economic reform in the Muslim world and, on the other, active support from the major Powers to ensure political justice and socio-economic revival for all Islamic peoples. While the Islamic world has taken its first step in the form of nominating a Commission of Eminent Persons to propose measures for a renaissance in the Muslim world, the major Powers of the West have yet to show movement in seriously trying to resolve internationally recognized disputes affecting the Muslim world.

The industrialized world must support the endeavour to bring about an Islamic renaissance, especially through adequate financial and technical assistance and larger trade opportunities. More important, justice must be offered to Islamic peoples in the form of the resolution of all outstanding international disputes which affect Muslims. There is no time to lose. Action has to be taken before an iron

curtain finally descends between the West and the Islamic world.

The tragedy of Palestine is an open wound inflicted on the psyche of every Muslim. It generates anger and resentment across the Islamic world. Continued Israeli violence and the Israelis' erection of the illegal separation wall, usurping more Palestinian land, as well as suicide attacks by misguided Palestinians, are frustrating the prospects of peace and prolonging the agony of the Palestinian people. While Pakistan stands for peace, recognizing the right of Israel to exist as also the right of the Palestinians to have their own homeland, we can never accept the usurpation of additional Palestinian land. Israel has no right to erect its separation wall beyond its 1967 boundaries. Pakistan calls on Israel to withdraw the wall from all occupied Palestinian lands, taking it back to the pre-1967 boundaries. We also call on Israel to stop the daily atrocities against Palestinians. Pakistan also appeals to President Yasser Arafat to use his influence to reciprocally halt the intifada and give peace a chance.

A major responsibility rests with the Quartet, and in particular with the world's greatest Power, the United States, to secure a fair and peaceful solution to the problem, realizing the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, harmony and security. The United States can and must play the role of a just broker of peace. Peace must succeed in the Middle East; failure is no longer an option.

It has always been my conviction that Pakistan and India can resolve all their differences, including over Jammu and Kashmir, through a sincere dialogue. The dangerous confrontation of 2002 and the three wars prior to that between our two countries have demonstrated that there is no military solution to our problems. The aspiration to peace enjoys popular support in Pakistan and, I believe, in India as well. Neither country can achieve its ambition for social and economic progress in the absence of peace. We must achieve peace for the sake of the impoverished people of South Asia — for their development and prosperity.

After several aborted attempts, Pakistan and India have been able to initiate confidence-building measures and a composite dialogue this year to address all outstanding issues. Pakistan has pursued this process with complete sincerity, giving bilateralism a final chance. We feel that the dual channels of confidence-building measures and the dialogue process must proceed in tandem. We also are firmly committed to resolving all disputes with India peacefully, including the Kashmir dispute. That issue cannot be ignored. Its resolution cannot be delayed inordinately. We desire a resolution for Kashmir which is just and acceptable to India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

We also seek strategic stability with India. I am glad to say that up until now, the normalization process has progressed well, in a cordial atmosphere. Now that the negotiations are entering the difficult stage of grappling with solutions to previously irreconcilable disputes, Pakistan hopes that India will show the same sincerity, flexibility and boldness that Pakistan will demonstrate. I look forward to my meeting the day after tomorrow with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. I would like to convey to him that this is the moment for peace; we must not allow it to slip away.

Iraq has taken a serious turn, to the anguish of the entire world community. It is imperative that together with closing the Palestine and Kashmir fronts, we also wind down the Iraq confrontation. Pakistan stands for restoration of peace and stability in Iraq to ensure its unity and territorial integrity. That can only be achieved through handing over governance authority to the people of Iraq and allowing them full control over their natural resources. Internal law and order and security can be best promoted by local Iraqi police and militia, who need to be built up expeditiously.

At an opportune time, and at the request of the people and Government of Iraq, the Muslim world could play a role in bringing peace and harmony to this conflict-torn nation.

The forthcoming elections in Afghanistan will be an important landmark in the country's progress towards democracy and stability. Pakistan will do all it can to prevent terrorists from using our territory to disrupt the Afghan election process. The subsequent parliamentary elections in April 2005 would also augur well for self-governance in Afghanistan. While the political channel is progressing well — and we wish President Karzai all success — the process of building the Afghan National Army and reconstruction efforts need to be accelerated in order to install durable peace in Afghanistan.

In our globalized world, peace and development are interdependent, now more than ever before. Despite

dynamic growth in some parts of the developing world, economic and social disparities are increasing. The rich are richer; the poor are poorer. Over 2 billion people on our planet — a quarter of the world's population — live in abject poverty, afflicted by hunger, disease and conflict. Islands of peace and prosperity cannot coexist for long within oceans of instability and poverty.

A bold and innovative global strategy is required to redress the growing inequalities in the world. Good governance is a precondition for development; but the need to rectify the glaring inequities and imbalances in the international financial and trade systems is equally essential.

Official development assistance can and must be doubled. Innovative ways can and must be adopted to generate the financial resources required for development. The billions transferred abroad by corrupt leaders should be returned to the looted countries to finance poverty alleviation, education and health. International investment flows should be consciously directed to the poorer developing countries, where such funds could unleash the latent power of the poor for consumption and production.

We also know by now that trade, and not just aid, is the way to promote growth and to benefit from globalization. However, it has to be made more equitable. Unfair agricultural subsidies should be eliminated and high and escalating tariffs that discriminate against the products of the poor should be removed. Special and differential treatment should be offered to disadvantaged developing countries. In my view, we need more than a level playing field; we need a field tilted in favour of the developing countries.

Unless the world's leaders generate the political will required to agree and implement those measures urgently, the Millennium Development Goals will remain a mirage.

In Pakistan, we are well on the way to transforming our country into a modern, progressive, tolerant, democratic, Islamic state, reflecting the vision of our founding father, Quaid-e-Azam. Democracy has been restored in Pakistan. The people have been empowered through a revolutionary local government system. Our women have been empowered. However, like other developing countries, Pakistan confronts several challenges. But, we are confident of success. Our governance is good. Our national priorities are absolutely clear.

Today, there is welcome resurgence of support for multilateralism. This must be a multilateralism based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, a cooperative and democratic multilateralism. It must seek just, peaceful and durable solutions to conflicts and disputes. It must promote a programme for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It must foster global development and global prosperity.

All our collective aspirations can best be pursued within this world Organization. The United Nations must be strengthened and revitalized to respond to the challenges of twenty-first century.

The United Nations Security Council should become more effective, democratic and representative. There is no agreement on the aspiration of a few States to acquire permanent membership in the Security Council. The overwhelming majority of States are against the creation of new centres of privilege. The Council should be enlarged to ensure the representation of the mostly small and medium States which have joined the United Nations over the last three decades. We have to consider new ideas to craft a consensus on the enlargement of the Security Council.

Pakistan believes that a new consensus on peace, security and development, can and should be achieved on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations next year. The summit meeting suggested by the Secretary-General for next year must lead to a negotiated final document adopted through consensus. That historic summit will, I hope, and Pakistan hopes, create a new paradigm to achieve universal peace and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the statement he has just made.

General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Fayssal Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Latvia.

Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Vike-Freiberga: I wish I could begin this address on a more optimistic note, but since we last convened at the General Assembly one year ago, many dramatic and disconcerting events have occurred on the world stage. I refer in particular to the indiscriminate and brutal terrorist attacks on civilians all over the world: in Russia, Spain, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and many other countries. I refer to the targeting of children and their parents at schools, on buses and on aeroplanes. I refer to the almost daily bomb blasts on busy city streets, in marketplaces and in residential apartment buildings. I refer to the sadistic pride and relish with which terrorists have been filming the shooting, throat-slashing and decapitation of their victims.

The purposeful torture and killing of civilians is one of the basest forms of human barbarity. It is a crime against humanity, along with ethnic cleansing and genocide. Unfortunately, terrorism is not disappearing from the news headlines of the twenty-first century. Instead, it is becoming the principal method of warfare used by disaffected groups seeking to achieve their political ends and to blackmail national Governments. Nothing can justify the use of such means. Any seemingly noble ends can only be discredited by using terrorism to further them.

Frequently, countries facing terrorist attacks have been using vastly superior military capabilities to strike hard at real or perceived terrorist targets. Too often, however, those strikes have had an undesirable side effect of their own: the further wounding and killing of civilians and the additional destruction of property. Such strikes have done nothing to diminish the deep-seated feelings of resentment of disaffected populations. The events of the past few years, and indeed of the past few decades, point to the stark and sobering reality that the military option alone has not been effective in rooting out terrorism and that terrorism has not been an effective means for achieving political aspirations and goals.

Such never-ending cycles of killing and mounting mutual hostility will cease once and for all only when the parties involved forsake the use of violence. In the Middle East, Latvia views the road map for peace as the only feasible means of obtaining a cessation of hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians. My country encourages the interested parties to do their utmost to de-escalate tensions and resume the peace process.

In Iraq, the United States-led coalition forces have handed over power to an interim Government, but security problems are hampering the reconstruction of the country and threaten the viability of free and fair elections this coming January. The transition in Iraq will require continued international assistance, and I encourage the United Nations to assume an active role in that regard.

Afghanistan is due to experience its first ever elections next month. Latvia hopes that the historic event will not be derailed by violent attempts to disrupt the democratic process in that country. Latvia is ready to continue supporting international efforts to provide peace and security in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Ten years after the human catastrophe in Rwanda, we are again confronted with the systematic rape, torture and killing of civilians, in the Darfur region of the Sudan. Those crimes have occurred on such a wide scale that they might be classifiable as ethnic cleansing and genocide. Latvia welcomes the mediation efforts of the African Union and encourages all parties involved to ensure that no further harm comes to the civilians of the region. My country supports Security Council resolution 1564 (2004) of 18 September, which urges the Sudanese Government to act decisively to stop the violence.

The United Nations faces the prospect of establishing a new peacekeeping mission in Sudan, in addition to the 17 field operations already on the ground. During the past few months alone, two new Missions were established, in Burundi and Haiti, while a third was expanded in Côte d'Ivoire. The United Nations peacekeeping budget for next year may nearly double as a result.

Latvia is deeply committed to the United Nations and to effective multilateralism as a central element of United Nations activities. Latvia believes that the United Nations must maintain its crucial role in the mediation of international disputes and that Member

States must summon the collective political will to support the United Nations as a truly credible force for peace.

The Security Council has been the principal forum in which the countries of the world deliberate together on matters of peace and security. Latvia believes that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform must continue its activities and come forth with proposals on how to make the Council more representative of today's political and economic realities, how to provide the Council with greater legitimacy and how to render it more effective. A serious debate should be continued regarding the enlargement of the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council. Countries such as Japan or Germany can and should play an increasingly stronger role in this framework in view of their substantial contribution to United Nations activities and commitments.

Proposals for enhancing coordination between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council have made little progress. Overlapping mandates and the duplication of efforts continue to reduce the efficiency of the United Nations. The economic and social programmes of the United Nations need to be reformed, as well. For example, why are the issues of the Economic and Social Council reviewed four times a year, when twice a year might be sufficient? Combined with the restructuring of the Economic and Social Council's functional commissions, such a reduction of redundancy in the review process could free up vital financial and human resources for important economic and social development programmes in the developing countries that need them most.

Latvia recognizes the important role of the United Nations and other international organizations in promoting worldwide development and reducing poverty. Having regained its independence only 13 years ago, Latvia is gradually completing the transition from a receiving to a donor country. We are grateful for the valuable assistance that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has provided to our country since 1993, and we are pleased that UNDP has extended its mandate until the end of 2005. Although the amount that Latvia is contributing to worldwide development assistance is not very large at the moment, we are committed to allocating no less than one third of 1 per cent of our gross national product to development assistance by 2006, as required of all the European Union's member States.

Latvia's priority areas for development cooperation centre around the promotion of democratic and civil societies, economic development, environmental protection and other issues in the countries neighbouring the European Union, particularly Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, to name some of the countries to which Latvia has already provided bilateral technical assistance.

Latvia is eager to reduce the divides between the developed and the developing world. The industrial society into which we were born has been characterized by the heavy machinery and tools that have marked human progress over the last two centuries. Now this society is evolving into an information and knowledge society, with innovation as an important engine of growth. Latvia has been actively involved in the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and considers it an honour to chair the Preparatory Committee of the second phase of the Summit, which will take place in Tunis in November 2005. The WSIS process should be an integral part of the international community's efforts to eradicate poverty as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals, which will be reviewed periodically until 2015.

Although the delegations here today come from many different backgrounds, practice different faiths and speak different languages, all of us in this room share the same desire to make our world a better, cleaner, more peaceful and more prosperous place to live in. We share a world view on what it means to be a human and on the inherent value of each human life. The more we strive to enshrine such values as tolerance, compassion and mutual respect, the more human and the more humane our societies will become.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Latvia for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Mugabe: I am delighted to congratulate Mr. Ping, a distinguished son of Africa, upon his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Indeed, at a time when the community of nations has committed itself to paying due attention to issues that relate to development in Africa through support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and other mechanisms, his presidency gives us the hope and confidence that our concerns and aspirations and those of others will remain high on the agenda of this body. Let me also express our sincere appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, for the efficient and exemplary manner in which he conducted the business of the fifty-eighth session.

At the fifty-eighth session, I spoke alongside others about the need to reform the United Nations and its related bodies so as to make them more democratic. I stressed the perils inherent in the status quo, particularly with regard to the dominance of global politics by one super-Power and its closest allies. While we welcome the current debate on enhancing the authority and role of the United Nations, we wish to stress the need to address the core issue of the democratization of international governance. Debate on the reform of the Security Council has been too long drawn out because of attempts calculated to protect those whose interests are best served by the status quo.

Ironically, it is some of those same forces that, since last year, have been raining bombs and hellfire on innocent Iraqis purportedly in the name of democracy. Iraq today has become a vast inferno created by blatant and completely illegal and defiant acts of aggression by the United States, Britain and their allies, in the full trail of which the world has witnessed mass destruction of both human lives and property, and with them our human rights, values, morality and the norms of international law as enshrined in our Charter. We are now being coerced into accepting and believing that a new political-cum-religious doctrine has arisen, namely, that there is but one political god — George W. Bush — and that Tony Blair is his prophet. It is the Koran writ anew in Baghdad.

The United Nations Charter remains the only and most sacred document and proponent of the relations of our nations. Anything else is political heresy.

We note that the Secretary-General has placed before the General Assembly the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. While civil society makes a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations, we hope that any arrangements that will eventually be agreed upon will recognize that the United Nations remains an inter-State and intergovernmental body. It is also our expectation that the conclusions of the debate will recognize the different levels of development of civil society in different parts of the world.

As we prepare for the mid-term review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration in September 2005, it is apparent that many developing countries, including my own country, Zimbabwe, may be unable to meet the goals and targets set, as our subregion of southern Africa has in recent years experienced extended and successive periods of inclement weather, principally droughts, that have wreaked havoc upon our economies and accordingly diminished our capacity to achieve the Millennium Declaration targets. The situation, particularly with regards to the health and education sectors, has also been worsened by the brain drain and the devastating effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In that regard, Zimbabwe welcomes the continuing efforts of this community of nations to find solutions to the scourge of HIV and AIDS that has ravaged our peoples and economies. At the national level, we have taken measures, within our limited means, to combat the pandemic. We are also coordinating our efforts at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) level. Regrettably, we continue to see an unfortunate and futile tendency to use assistance in this area as a reward for political

compliance and malleability, making it unavailable to countries whose Governments are deemed "inconvenient". Let it be realized that the pandemic does not respect boundaries and that these self-serving, selective approaches will have little or no meaningful results.

Zimbabwe has also had to withstand unprovoked declared and undeclared sanctions, imposed by Britain and its allies, which are bent on bringing down our legitimately elected Government. Mr. Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, has arrogantly and unashamedly announced in his Parliament that his Government was working with Zimbabwe's opposition party to bring about regime change. Once again, the lawless nature of that man who, along with his Washington master, believes he is God-ordained to rule our world, has shown itself. Regime change is the inalienable right of the Zimbabwean people, who, through their sovereign vote, can make and unmake our Governments.

In any case, we reject completely the assertions of, and pretence to, democracy by our former colonial masters, whose undemocratic regimes we taught the lesson of one man — or one woman — one vote through our armed liberation struggles.

As we in Africa look at the situation here in the United States, we are aware of the plight of the black people — Afro-Americans — of both yesterday and today and of the semi-slave, half-citizen status that has been their burden. Do the blacks in the United States have the same political, social and economic rights and status as their white counterparts? When we will we ever have a black — African-American — President of the United States? Never, ever. Why?

I wish to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my Government and that of the people of Zimbabwe for the humanitarian assistance we received from the international community during our period of need. Without such support, we would not have been able to avert a major catastrophe.

I am pleased to inform you, Sir, that we have, in spite of the sanctions and evil wishes of Britain and its allies, now emerged from that difficult phase. We had a relatively good agricultural season this year, and our land reform programme has begun to make a significant contribution towards the turnaround of our economy. Despite the partial drought at the beginning of the season, we have managed this year to realize a good harvest — certainly one good enough to ensure that we meet our food requirements until the next season. We plead with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to stop its strange political mouthings, lies and fabrications about our situation. Our own regional organizations know the truth about Zimbabwe. We urge the IMF to listen to them, and, for once, to be clean.

My Government is determined to eliminate corruption and its corrosive effects on national development efforts. After signing the International Convention against Corruption in November last year, we put in place legal and administrative measures that have already arrested a growing and deliberate tendency to circumvent normal business practices, particularly in the financial-services sector. We have, however, experienced some setbacks in our efforts, as some countries, particularly in the developed West, continue to provide safe havens for fugitive economic saboteurs from our country.

In March next year, Zimbabwe will be holding its sixth democratic parliamentary elections since independence in 1980. Those elections, like others before them, will be conducted in accordance with our national laws and the SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections, recently adopted by our subregion. We do not need any lessons from the Netherlands or its imperialist allies from the European Union on this question. Zimbabwe will indeed welcome to the elections those observers whose sole and undivided purpose is to observe the process and not to meddle in the politics of the country.

The fight against international terrorism has exposed the duplicity and insincerity of erstwhile leading democracies and human rights monitors with regard to the question of the observance of human rights. We have seen established international conventions thrown to the dogs, and resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies on this issue have come to naught.

We are seriously concerned at the fact that the United Nations, the pre-eminent instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security, watched helplessly while Iraq was unlawfully attacked and plundered by the United States and United Kingdom-led so-called coalition of the willing. Such belligerent, gunslinging diplomacy and the illegitimate territorial occupation of the State of Iraq are blemishes on the fair-play image of the United Nations.

While the sadistic scenes from Abu Ghraib remain vivid in our minds, other places in Iraq, as well as Guantanamo Bay, have provided useful samples of the Western concept of respect for human rights. Let me say once again that the West should spare us their lessons on human rights. They do not have the moral authority to speak about, let alone parade themselves as torch-bearers of, human rights.

Zimbabwe remains deeply concerned about the situation in the Middle East. We continue to be revolted by a situation where the collective decisions and authority of the United Nations are disregarded with impunity on account of big-brother support. We demand an immediate lifting of all restrictions illegally imposed on the Palestinian people, which have seen President Yasser Arafat remain a virtual prisoner of foreign occupation. We welcome the recent opinion given by the International Court of Justice that found the construction of the Israeli wall to be in contravention of international law, and the subsequent General Assembly resolution that demanded an immediate halt to that monstrosity.

As the Assembly is aware, the African Union earlier this year established its own Peace and Security Council to seek and promote African solutions to African problems. Already, the Council is seized with the matter of the crisis in western Sudan. Those efforts need the support of the international community.

Let me conclude by assuring Mr. Ping of my country's support as he presides over the work of the General Assembly at this session. I wish also to reiterate my country's commitment positively to contribute to the fulfilment of the aims and purposes of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Mr. Robert Mugabe, for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi.

Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Bingu wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mutharika: I am delighted to be participating, for the first time, in the deliberations of the General Assembly as head of State and Government of the Republic of Malawi.

I should like to begin by joining others who have spoken before me in congratulating Mr. Jean Ping on his assumption of the high office of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I have no doubt that his election will provide an opportunity to increase global awareness of the enormous challenges that Africa and other less developed regions of the world are facing. I hope that, through him, the opportunity for the poor countries to fully participate in world economic prosperity will be enhanced.

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, for guiding the work of the fifty-eighth session with admirable skill and pragmatism.

We also salute Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the dynamic leadership skills that he continues to display in steering the affairs of the Organization.

I have entitled my statement "Sharing global prosperity". I have done so in order to underscore the fact that one of the most daunting challenges facing the international community today is to achieve a balance in economic transformation and growth between the rich and the poor countries so as to eradicate poverty among the latter.

In looking at the future of the United Nations, we need to take stock of the response to world poverty. I am aware that several attempts have been made by the international community to alleviate poverty — and the goal is still being pursued —but the results so far have been dismal. During the past 30 years, for example, the number of least developed countries has risen from 25 to 49. This means that globally, economic growth is in reverse gear. Among the questions we are asking with regard to the sharing of global prosperity is this: why

are the industrialized countries more prosperous, while in Africa and the rest of the developing countries poverty is increasing? In other words, why has globalization failed to achieve a more equitable distribution of global prosperity?

In Malawi we have discovered that we need to seriously transform our economic structures in order to begin to provide and produce new wealth. This can be achieved by transforming the abundant agricultural commodities, raw materials and minerals into goods that can be traded globally. It is only by creating new wealth in rural areas that we can effectively eradicate poverty.

Our major strategy is to gain a share in global prosperity by transforming Malawi from being an importing and consuming country to being a predominantly producing and exporting country. In other words, we must begin to position our economy to take full advantage of global trade. This will be achieved through intensive industrial research and the application of science and technology to the specific conditions in my country.

Malawi — as in the case of most African countries — is richly endowed with a wide range of agricultural primary commodities, good soil and water resources that can enable us to develop viable agro-processing and manufacturing industries. The critical issue for us in Malawi, therefore, is the creation of new wealth as the basis for poverty reduction. In order to do that, we must encourage significant domestic savings, as well as inflows of resources, especially foreign direct investment.

We in Malawi estimate that in order to alleviate poverty, we need to achieve an annual growth rate of at least 6 per cent over the next decade. In order to achieve that, we are determined to create conditions for sustainable macroeconomic growth through fundamental policy reforms to improve economic and political governance. We have put in place measures for the reform of the public sector, the agricultural sector and the private sector.

We are also determined to improve good governance by stamping out corruption. To that end, we have adopted a zero-tolerance stance with regard to corruption. I am therefore happy to have signed, yesterday, the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Malawi is cognizant of the fact that our national vision must be fully supported by the international community. That is why Malawi joins the call for better market access and lower tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in industrialized countries.

Malawi would therefore like to stress the need to advance the dialogue in the Doha development agenda. For their part, the industrialized nations need to seriously address the major concerns of the poor economies. The challenge for industrialized countries is therefore to share with the poor countries the prosperity that comes about through globalization, by assisting us to stand on our own and to develop appropriate technologies for transforming our agricultural raw materials, minerals and other natural resources into wealth. In Malawi, we believe that a partner who walks with you side-by-side down the road is better than one whom you have to carry on your shoulders. We want to walk with the industrialized nations; we do not want to be carried on their shoulders.

Some positive efforts that Malawi welcomes towards global equity include the various initiatives taken by the Group of Eight countries aimed at addressing some of the concerns to which I have just referred. Among those are the United Kingdom's decision to significantly increase its aid and technical assistance to Africa; the reaffirmation of strong support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development; the decision by the United States Government to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act from 2008 to 2015; and the European Union's "Everything But Arms" initiative, which seeks to enhance opportunities for increased access for African exports into the European market.

Those initiatives are, indeed, encouraging, and my Government fully appreciates them. I wish, however, to appeal for those noble promises and commitments to be matched by action. We need proof that actions speak louder than words.

The management of foreign debt is another positive way in which global prosperity can be shared. Our concern is that, in spite of numerous initiatives aimed at finding a durable solution to the debt problem, the world is nowhere near that solution. My Government is still allocating a significant amount of our resources to debt-servicing at the expense of investment in infrastructure, production and income

generation. Such diversion of resources has led, among other things, to the deepening of poverty and a lack of significant macroeconomic growth.

However, Malawi, like other eligible African countries, had welcomed arrangements for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. But the conditions for reaching the decision and completion points are so arduous that only a few countries in sub-Saharan Africa have managed to reach the completion stage. We believe that the preconditions for the HIPC Initiative are unrealistic. Surely, less stringent conditionalities would have enabled more countries to succeed.

That notwithstanding, Malawi welcomes the measures by some bilateral donors to respond to the external debt crisis. In particular, I must mention the Government of Japan, which, a few weeks ago, cancelled a debt Malawi owed it, amounting to $256 million. I take this opportunity to thank Japan most sincerely for that gesture. We hope that other industrialized countries will follow this example.

I referred earlier to the need for adequate donor support to sustain national initiatives. In that regard, I believe that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) provides a framework for sharing the responsibility for economic development between Africa and the rich countries. It is for that reason that Malawi has acceded to NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism in a bid to put in place internationally accepted political and economic good governance. Our accession to the African Peer Review Mechanism is also a demonstration of our confidence in the NEPAD programme as a tool to enhance Africa's effective participation in global prosperity.

Let me now turn to a global challenge that threatens all development efforts. This is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pound incessantly upon the African economies, destroying the capacity of many countries to achieve sustainable economic development. Because it affects the most productive segment of our labour force, we are losing more qualified and experienced personnel much faster than we can train new ones.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a human tragedy of unimaginable proportions. Experience in dealing with this disaster in my country has taught us that HIV/AIDS is a medical crisis, an economic crisis, a social crisis and a political crisis. It is a medical crisis because no cure has yet been found for HIV/AIDS. It is an economic crisis because it is depleting financial and human resources for development while also devastating our national capacities for good governance. HIV/AIDS is a social crisis because of the stigma that makes the affected unable to be integrated into normal day-to-day relations as well as in the work places. HIV/AIDS has also created a large number of orphans that need to be cared for. HIV/AIDS is a political crisis because it threatens democratic institutions by killing politicians and others who are the voice of the people.

Therefore, in order to deal with this pandemic, we have learned the imperative of adopting a holistic approach. It is for that reason that we appeal to the United Nations to collectively raise new awareness, new assumptions and new solutions. To that end, the United Nations ought to redesign its policy in providing support, care, treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, alongside the provision of adequate, nutritious food and a proper diet.

Before concluding my statement, I wish to raise another concern I have concerning the efforts towards sustainable growth and the development of the world. This relates to the need for world peace. One can hardly emphasize enough that, without global peace, there cannot be global prosperity. In that regard, I would like to welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General, jointly with the Security Council, in taking a number of decisive steps towards conflict prevention, resolution and management around the globe.

Turning to the specific issues of peace in Africa, I am concerned that sub-Saharan Africa has been and continues to be one of the most unstable and conflict-prone regions of the globe. The region also happens to be home to most of the world's poorest people, who are living below the international poverty line.

The conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, in particular, is yet another sad chapter in the history of sub-Saharan Africa and one that the African people can ill afford. Africa and the international community must find quick and lasting solutions to the crisis in the Darfur region.

I would like to conclude my statement by assuring the General Assembly that my Government fully endorses the proposals to reform the United Nations. We share the belief that a more representative

and democratic United Nations will enhance the efficiency and credibility of this global Organization. It will also enhance the efforts towards a just and more equitable sharing of global prosperity.

May God bless the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Malawi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

Address by The Right Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Right Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Martin (Canada): I want to talk today about United Nations reform, particularly about the way we should serve and the way we should do business if the United Nations is to play the role we want it to in the twenty-first century.

The world is organized into independent States and the primary obligation of Governments is to look after their own people. This presents us with a fundamental dilemma, for unless we also act collectively on the basis of our common humanity, the rich will become richer, the poor will become poorer, and hundreds of millions of people will be at risk. Thus, we need institutions whose primary obligation is to our common humanity. Herein lies the importance of the United Nations. It comprises Member States, but its mission is, indeed, to serve the world's peoples. Its Charter makes this very clear:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women."

Others, quite properly, will talk about structural reform. But today I want to talk about reforms designed to put our common humanity at the centre of the agenda of the United Nations.

Canada sees five areas where bold steps are required. The first area is the responsibility to protect — the need to develop the rules and the political will that would allow the international community to intervene in countries to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe.

Darfur is a human tragedy of immense proportions.

(*spoke in French*)

We welcome the Security Council's support for expanded engagement there, although we believe the international response should be more robust. The African Union, which has agreed to lead that effort, must have the unswerving support of the international community. Canada is offering $20 million to assist, and we call on others to join in now.

(*spoke in English*)

It is good that the international community is finally moving, but it has taken far too long. The Security Council has been bogged down in debating the issue. It has looked at whether Darfur is a threat to international peace and security. It is considering whether the tragedy qualifies as genocide, because either could provide justification, under international law, for intervention. The fact is, though, that, while the international community struggles with definitions, the people of Darfur struggle with disaster. They are hungry, they are homeless, they are sick, and many have been driven out of their own country. Tens of thousands have been murdered, raped and assaulted. War crimes and crimes against humanity are being committed.

We must not let debates about definitions become obstacles to action. We should not have to go through such painful exercises to figure out how to respond to humanitarian catastrophe. We need clear principles that

will allow the international community to intervene much faster in situations like the one in Darfur.

Our common humanity should be a powerful enough argument, and yet that is precisely what is missing. Put simply, there is still no explicit provision in international law for intervention on humanitarian grounds. The "responsibility to protect" is intended to fill that gap. It says that we should have the legal right to intervene in a country on the grounds of humanitarian emergency alone. We should be able to do so when the Government of a country is unwilling or unable to protect its people from extreme harm as a result of internal war, repression or, simply, State failure.

The primary responsibility for the protection of a State's own population lies with that State itself. We are not arguing for a unilateral right to intervene in one country whenever another country feels like it. It is always preferable to have multilateral authority for intervention in the affairs of a sovereign State. What we seek is the evolution of international law and practice so that multilateral action may be taken in situations of extreme humanitarian emergency.

International law is moving in the right direction. Existing instruments such as the Convention on Genocide and human rights treaties acknowledge States' obligations to their own people. The establishment of the International Criminal Court and criminal tribunals are further steps forward. Thus customary international law is evolving to provide a solid basis in the building of a normative framework for collective humanitarian intervention. To speed it along, however, Member States should now adopt a General Assembly resolution recognizing the evolution of sovereignty to encompass the international responsibility to people. In turn, the Security Council should establish new thresholds for when the international community judges that civilian populations face extreme threats; and for exploring non-military and, if necessary, proportionate military options to protect civilians. The responsibility to protect is not a license for intervention; it is an international guarantor of political accountability.

The second area I would speak to is the "responsibility to deny", which encompasses the need to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not under any circumstances spread to States or terrorists prepared to use them, especially against innocent civilians. Non-proliferation and disarmament remain fundamental pillars of the commitment of the United Nations to international peace and security.

In both cases, multilateralism has been challenged by dramatic changes in the security climate, and there is a clear need to make our systems stronger and more responsive. Strict verification is the key.

The United Nations nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, needs stronger tools, and it needs political support. We need more rigorous controls on sensitive nuclear technology, and the Security Council must be prepared to deal with non-compliance effectively. The fact is that, as we all know, determined proliferators have been able to circumvent their treaty obligations. The United Nations should establish a permanent inspection and verification mechanism that can reinforce and supplement existing verification systems.

More generally, and to show how far we have to go on the disarmament agenda, and on the responsibility to deny, the Conference on Disarmament, charged with the responsibility for negotiating new multilateral instruments, has not even been able to agree on a work plan since 1998. Surely the Conference must get back to productive work.

(*spoke in French*)

The third area is the "responsibility to respect" human beings, their dignity, their freedom and their culture. I would like to talk about a broader notion of human rights - one that can encompass individual rights, the protection of collective rights and pluralism, as reflected in the concept of cultural diversity. In fact, the United Nations Development Programme's recent *Human Development Report* stresses that cultural diversity is also tied in with freedom. That is why we support a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization instrument on cultural promotion.

Since the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humanity has made remarkable strides in the area of human rights. Conventions are now in place to protect a number of rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural. But we must remain vigilant in the face of new forms of abuse, such as international trafficking of people and the horrifying child sex trade.

In addition to the protections afforded individual rights, various conventions have also been concluded to better protect minorities, to denounce racial discrimination and to combat marginalization. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the most divisive conflicts result, more often than not, from attempts by one group to prevent other groups from realizing their perfectly legitimate economic, religious, social or political aspirations. Entire communities are threatened. Violence, civil strife and even failed States ensue. Kosovo, Bosnia, the Great Lakes region in Africa, and today Darfur are the most chilling examples. The international community must take vigorous action to protect individuals as well as minority communities. It is not enough to simply possess various legal instruments; they must be put into practice. Institutions responsible for human rights must reveal to the entire world those guilty of abuse — be they armed groups, communities or Governments — and take the necessary measures. The United Nations is our moral conscience and it is up to us to act.

The fourth area is the responsibility to build. The objectives of the Millennium Summit on poverty, disease and global insecurity will come to naught if we do not follow up on the Monterrey Consensus, according to which genuine development requires a holistic approach to such issues as debt, market access and social investment.

That being said, as we have seen in Haiti over the past 10 years, all the aid in the world will have only a fleeting effect if a country does not have functioning public institutions. We must build countries' governance capacities and take the time to do it right. The same is true for economic institutions. Those that work well marshal the creative energies of local entrepreneurs. That is the message of the United Nations Commission on the Private Sector and Development: a thriving economy is the product of citizens' trust in their country's public institutions. In brief, development depends on governance.

Lastly, there is responsibility for the future, which is to say the obligation we have to leave a better world for our children. That is no small challenge. It involves all aspects of our common heritage: health, the environment, oceans, space. The new pandemics demand our most urgent attention. AIDS, SARS and the Ebola virus are sounding a terrifying alarm, but scientists are predicting even worse diseases. The World Health Organization must bolster its surveillance systems. It must do a better job coordinating its actions with those of other United Nations bodies.

Beyond health issues lies the whole question of managing our environment. It is gravely threatened. Only international cooperation and technical assistance can bring lasting solutions to such problems as access to clean air and water. Furthermore, we need an oceans policy that allows us to rebuild our fish stocks. Access to fisheries must be better regulated under international law. Simply put, the pillage of those global resources must stop.

Space is our final frontier. It has always captured our imagination. What a tragedy it would be if space became one big weapons arsenal and the scene of a new arms race. In 1967, the United Nations agreed that weapons of mass destruction must not be based in space. The time has come to extend that ban to all weapons.

(*spoke in English*)

I have talked today about responsibilities. In conclusion, let me mention one more: the responsibility to act. We await the report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel and we anticipate substantial recommendations for reform. Many countries are focused on the Security Council and we should support reforms that will make it more effective and will permit those countries which actively support United Nations peacekeeping, development and other activities to continue to have a meaningful opportunity to serve.

But we must also look forward to recommendations that go well beyond the Security Council. For example, there is a need to set out measures to facilitate an integrated response to the diverse range of security challenges that each of us faces, from the proliferation of terrorism to improving United Nations coordination on development, health and the environment. As individual countries, as individual members of regional organizations, and as participants in various international groups that form around specific interests, we all must act to bridge the differences that divide us and to forge an international consensus for reform of the United Nations.

In another context, for instance, Canada has proposed a special meeting at which leaders from 20 or so countries in the developed and developing worlds

would get together to discuss our collective challenges and responsibilities. This could very well include providing a major boost to United Nations reform efforts.

In any event, no matter how one comes at it, the time has come for real reform of the United Nations. All of us in this Hall and in our respective Governments must put aside narrow interests and work to common purpose to strengthen this universal institution, whose activities give force to our common humanity.

Four years ago, at the Millennium Summit, the leaders of the world agreed that "we have a duty ... to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable" (*resolution 55/2, para. 2*). That duty will not be discharged unless we as Governments speak to the dignity and to the freedom of every human being on Earth, here at the world's meeting place of nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Issam Fares, Deputy Prime Minister of Lebanon.

Mr. Fares (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): As the head of Lebanon's delegation to the General Assembly, I am pleased to congratulate Mr. Ping on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I wish him success in his presidency. I also want to acclaim the special relationship that my country has with his and to express our gratitude for the support which his country, Gabon, gives to our large Lebanese community working there and enjoying its hospitality.

I also wish to thank his predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, for his effective leadership as President of the Assembly at the fifty-eighth session.

Secretary-General Annan has earned our respect and appreciation for the efforts he has made to further the United Nations goal of working for a just, secure and peaceful world.

In past years, we in Lebanon used to come to this forum seeking United Nations help. The United Nations has always come to our support, adopting resolutions affirming Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We must express our gratitude to the United Nations for dispatching the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, stationed on our frontiers with Israel, and for the continuing and effective aid we get from the Organization's specialized agencies.

Today, we come to this forum with a different objective. Our country is in good shape. It has regained its position in the region. We have moved from destruction to construction, from rule by the militias to the rule of law, from anarchy to stability and security, and from division to unity. In the 1970s and 1980s, "Lebanonization" became a bad word. It stood for anarchy and infighting. Now, however, "Lebanonization" has regained its true, original meaning as a term standing for democracy, freedom, pluralism and recognition of the other.

Early this month, the Security Council adopted its resolution 1559 (2004), concerning Lebanon. The resolution has two dimensions, one regional, the other internal. As for the regional dimension, the resolution calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces still in Lebanon. There are Israeli forces occupying part of Lebanon: the Sheba'a farms and the surrounding area. Together with the rest of the Assembly, we call for the immediate withdrawal of those forces. From this rostrum, we also call upon Israel to halt its daily violations of our airspace.

There are also Syrian forces in Lebanon. Those forces are on our territory at the request of the Lebanese Government and in accordance with agreements signed by the two parties. Lebanon will accept the presence of those troops as long as the security situation in the region merits it. It is Lebanon's policy that not a single non-Lebanese soldier should remain on its soil. Our disagreement with the United Nations concerning the withdrawal of Syrian forces lies in the timing of the withdrawal; it is not a disagreement on the principle of withdrawal. The timing is under continuous discussion between the Lebanese and Syrian Governments; it will depend on their assessment of the security situation in the region. It is also the policy of Lebanon to support the national resistance movement, which played an important role in forcing Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon.

As for the Council's resolution's internal dimension — relating to the amendment of our Constitution — we consider it an unacceptable intervention in our internal affairs. Our Constitution, which was promulgated in 1926, may be the oldest

democratic constitution in the entire Middle East. Successive Lebanese Parliaments have amended it many times, always in accordance with its own amendment mechanisms and by absolute majorities.

Lebanon is a civilized democratic country. It abides by international law and reveres the moral principles and values on which it is based. My country was a founding Member of the United Nations in 1945. It played a leading role in the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. And, from this rostrum, Lebanon has exposed and opposed all destructive and disruptive ideologies and movements that we felt impeded the course of civilization and the future of humanity.

Today, we stand together with the United Nations in opposing international terrorism in all its forms. Lebanon has witnessed the horrors of terrorism on its soil; it has witnessed innocent people being kidnapped, tortured and killed. It knows what terrorism is all about, and, as a result of first-hand knowledge, it condemns it in the strongest terms. We also condemn those who wilfully confuse terrorism with the struggle for national liberation and independence. There are those who exploit the universal revulsion against terrorism to smear national liberation movements by branding them as terrorist. National liberation is a right and an honour; terrorism is a crime and cowardice.

Lebanon has recovered its stability and freedom. We are not here to ask anything specific for ourselves. We do, however, ask that the United Nations devote more attention to our region. The region is in turmoil, and it looks to the United Nations to help establish peace. The Organization has been granted legitimacy by all nations in its quest to ensure peace and stability.

We ask the following of the United Nations. First, the Organization should increase its efforts to solve the Middle East problem. It should do so by implementing its resolutions concerning Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967, by giving the Palestinians an independent sovereign State and by ensuring the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland. The more the Middle East conflict is allowed to fester, the more difficult it will be to resolve and the more danger and war there will be in the region.

Secondly, the United Nations should assume greater responsibility in resolving the violent conflict in Iraq and in restoring peace, stability and unity to the Iraqis. The Iraqis have suffered greatly, and they deserve strong and continuing support from the United Nations so that they can build a free, just and democratic order.

Thirdly, the Organization should help the Middle East region to achieve a new stable order based on just and equitable solutions and on the right to self-determination, since that region is the birthplace of the three monotheistic religions. The United Nations should also put an end to the arms race and to the waste of capabilities and rid the region of weapons of mass destruction.

Fourthly, the United Nations should encourage the establishment of civil organizations as a necessary first step in the process of reform and democratization. It is difficult to build an accountable democratic system without diverse and pluralistic civil institutions. Democracy is based on political parties, trade unions, civil institutions, humanitarian organizations and associations of all kinds, which are the foundations of reform and democracy.

Lebanon has a clear vision about the future of the region and of its civilization. It wants to play a decisive role in that future, as it did in forging an Eastern civilization in the region, based on the most profound principles of Christianity and Islam.

Lebanon is an international country, bigger than its size and population, due to its emigrants, who inhabit every nook and cranny of the world. Wherever they may be, the Lebanese are emissaries of innovation and production. Some countries may take pride in exporting weapons and in deploying armies, but Lebanon, since the dawn of history, has prided itself on exporting its precious young people, who, in all continents, assume the highest posts in universities, research centres, industries and businesses.

Lebanon supports the United Nations because of its universal views on humanity and its future. In the past, my country may have suffered precisely because of its universalism, its openness and its freedom. Because Lebanon has given much, Lebanon deserves much.

Finally, I wish the General Assembly and its Main Committees every success in addressing the many important items on the agenda. Lebanon will participate actively in all these proceedings, in any way that will help to attain the objectives of the United Nations and advance the universal cause of freedom and peace.

The meeting rose at 2.05 p.m.